

## CHEER FOR THE WORKER, AND HOPE FOR LONDON

### NO. 1566

A SERMON  
DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 28, 1880,  
BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Then spoke the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak and hold not your peace: for I am with you and no man shall set on you to hurt you: for I have much people in this city.”*  
*Acts 18:9, 10.*

IT is clear from this, dear friends, that even he who was not a whit behind the chief of the apostles sometimes needed special comfort. It is possible that even the bravest of the brave may be afraid. Sinking of heart assailed even Samson while as yet the thousand slain lay in heaps around him. Moses was cast down in the desert, and David on the throne. Even iron will melt, much more a heart of flesh. Remember the faintness of Elijah when he said, “Let me die, I am no better than my fathers,” and recollect that this was a lion-like man, one of those ministers of God who are as a flame of fire! The second Elijah, he who rebuked Herod to his face, was sadly staggered while he lay in prison. John the Baptist sent to Jesus to inquire, “Are you He that should come?” No doubt those heroes who have fought the battle of the truth of God, and have driven back its adversaries, have been men of like passions with us, and some of them of more than ordinary sensitiveness of feeling. Luther said, “Because I seem to be always strong and merry, men think that I walk on a bed of roses, but God knows how it is with me.” Perhaps no man ever experienced such mighty joys and such tremendous despairs as did that mighty man who shook the papacy to its foundation! Even Paul was not without his tendency to fear. He writes in one of his epistles: “When we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears.” Do not think, therefore, my dear brother or sister, if, in working for Christ, you get thoroughly cast down and sick of yourself, that you are undergoing an experience unknown to the sons of God. It is by no means so. Trembling takes hold on all in turns. Faintness is common enough on all hands. Fear, like the mist of the valley, steals over the very garden of the Lord, and there is not a flower in all the borders which is not, at times, bowed down with the weight of the chilly damp.

But the Lord took care to visit His servant when he was in a measure of trouble, or afraid of being so. He came to him in the visions of the night. We do not expect to see the Lord Jesus Christ in visions, now, for, “we have a more sure word of prophecy to which we do well to take heed, as unto a light that shines in a dark place”—we have the word of God, inspired and infallible! We have the whole of the divinely written roll—we can read it when we will, and from its pages God speaks with a clear and certain voice. A dream of the night might, perhaps, be only a dream, even in those olden times when God *did* speak in visions—but this word of the Lord is no delusion! It stands fast forever and ever, and every promise is sure, being made yes and amen in Christ Jesus! When by faith we take the promise, it is as if Christ did speak it again to each one of us, for the promise is never exhausted. It is as fresh today, when I read it, as when the eyes of saints a thousand years ago found comfort in it! God is always appearing to you who have believing eyes! God is never silent until we are deaf. He speaks to us morning by morning, and He has precept upon precept for the quiet hours of eventide. The Lord did but appear to Paul during one night, for visions are short and few, but *any* night you like to wake and open the Scriptures, and seek for the power of the Spirit to rest upon them, you shall hear Jesus speaking to you—and any day you turn to that passage in Isaiah, you shall hear the very words that Jesus spoke to Paul, “Fear not, I am with you,” with these additional words, “I am your God. When you go through the fire, you shall not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon you.”

Besides, visions and such like things belong to the infancy of the church—now that she has grown strong, she exercises a greater faith in God, and needs not that the Invisible should be supplemented by signs and wonders. If you plant a tree in an orchard, it is very common to put a big stake by the side of it to hold it up. Nobody thinks of putting a post to support an apple tree which has been there for the last 50 years! In fact, it could *hold* the stake rather than borrow support from it. When a ship leaves the docks and

passes down the river, you will see it towed out till it reaches the sea. But that same vessel will, by-and-by, spread all her sails, and with a heavenly breeze to bear her along, she will need no tug to tow her to the desired haven. The church of God, today, is a tree that needs no support of miracles and visions! She is a vessel that has braved for 2,000 years the battle and the breeze, and will still, till Christ comes, outride every storm! At this time, O servants of Jesus, you have the word of God, which is better than visions! Oh, that tonight the Lord Jesus would take of His own word, and by His Spirit, speak it home to all who love Him! Then will they be as much refreshed as though they were in Patmos with the beloved disciple. My prayer has been especially that the Lord would say to each one here present who knows His name, "Be not afraid, but speak and hold not your peace; for I am with you, and no man shall set on you to hurt you: for I have much people in this city." I am to be understood as speaking to every blood-bought man and woman with the anxious desire that the words of the text should be laid home to the heart of each one. O Spirit of God, make Your servant's words to be as fire among stubble, so that the gospel flame may spread abroad!

**I.** And, first, brothers and sisters, notice briefly THE TENDENCY OF OUR WEAKNESS.

That tendency is revealed in the first word—"Be not afraid." We feel, when we first find Christ, that we must speak for Jesus, and we do. But after a while a foolish fear freezes many a tongue, and keeps many a lip silent that ought to be telling out the wondrous story of redeeming love. We get to be afraid. We are not, nowadays, afraid as the first Christians might have been—of the amphitheater and the lions, or of Nero and his sword. Happily, we are delivered from almost all open persecution, but there are times which evidently frighten a good many. For instance, some are afraid to speak for Jesus because of the defects of their education. They fancy that when educated persons are present, if they say anything for Christ, they will make a mistake in grammar, or mispronounce a word, and the very learned folks will discover their ignorance, and set them down for dunces. I have heard a young preacher say that in his early days, when he saw a gentleman with a white cravat come into the village chapel, he felt that he could not preach. Something very dreadful about that, no doubt! Somebody from London has entered the cottage where the dear brother has been trying to talk about Christ, and he is in a cold sweat, and he hardly knows why. The stranger has a respectable black coat on, and is very different from the agricultural laborers who make up the usual congregation, and for fear of *him*, the champion of the cross is quaking! Do you not notice that the good brother's voice has undergone a serious toning down? He cannot speak with freedom, and yet, if he only knew it, his best friend in the whole congregation is that well-dressed stranger. He is afraid of a brother who would best sympathize with him, and most earnestly pray for him—the very brother who would encourage him most if they could have a half-hour's talk together. Friend over yonder, are you blushing because this incident has happened once and again to yourself? Do you not think that whenever you have been checked in that way it has been very foolish? Has not *pride* been at the bottom of it? Should we not be willing to be called blunderers? We should endeavor to do our Lord's work in the best possible manner, but if our education is deficient and we cannot overcome early disadvantages, ought we, therefore, to hold back? Should we not be willing to save a soul anyway? If we can declare the gospel in a masterly manner, by all means let us do it! But if we are slow of speech, and uncouth in utterance, let not these things silence us. Was not Moses slow of utterance? Was he silent? Did not Isaiah acknowledge that his lips were unfit to deliver God's message? Was he, therefore, idle? If a man is learned and educated, let him reckon that his learning should help him to *simplicity*—and if he is *not* educated, let him talk about Jesus Christ in his own way, with the words that come fresh from his heart, and let him never be afraid.

I have known others to be fearful, on the other hand, because they have not gathered educated people to listen to them, but are surrounded by a rough lot whose manners and habits distress them. Sensitive Christians have shrunk from speaking to such characters, for, they said, "Ah, they will turn it all to ridicule, and we must not throw pearls before swine." Brother, are you quite sure that you have any pearls, and are you quite sure that the people are swine? I generally feel as if what I had to say was not so pearly that I need be alarmed about the swine treading on it! And, also, I have felt, concerning my congregation, that as they have immortal souls, there is something about them which differentiates them from swine—and anyway, who am I to be so particular about the reception which men give to my words? Christ spoke even to those who refused Him, and shall not I do the same? Our Savior did not mean, by that expression, what you think He did. Some parts of our experience are choice as pearls, and these we may only tell to God's own people, and not to those who cannot appreciate them. But, as for the gospel, preach it before all the swine that ever can be gathered together, for to such is it sent! What were all the nations in our Lord's day but a swinish multitude, and yet He bade us preach the gospel to every creature! The worse the men, the more they need the gospel, and the more we are bound to carry it to them! Brothers and sisters in

Christ, it is your business, whoever may be around you, to tell what Jesus Christ has done for you! “But they would laugh at it.” Well, well, there are worse things than that in the world! Making people laugh is not the worst thing that can be done. I would sooner increase mirth in the world than sorrow. If I made men’s hearts ache about nothing, as our novelists often do, I would throw away my pen, and hold my tongue! But if, in consequence of some awkwardness or eccentricity, people smile at me—well, if they are the happier, it cannot hurt me. Why should they *not* laugh at me? And am I not, after all, ridiculous? “No,” says one, “I do not think *I* am.” Ah, but my brother, there is a comic side to you as well as to everybody else, and there is something about you, I dare say, that *is* ridiculous! I have generally found that the man who could not bear to be ridiculed was some precise kind of body who was the very person to excite remarks. Oh, be content to take a little of the rough with the smooth for your Master’s sake! Some hearts cannot be got at until, first of all, they feel a keen aversion to what they hear. Better that they should rave with wrath than feel nothing! We must get the oyster open, somehow, and if this may be done by a tempting bait as well as by sheer force, then let us try the gentle experiment. It may be the creature will only open out of spite, and perhaps it thinks to nip us when it shuts its shell—but we thrust in the knife of the gospel, and the deed is done! While they are criticizing our manner, we can stab at their sin! Sometimes the aversion which people display, and the contempt which they profess to feel for the preacher may only be a secondary means of enabling the gospel to get at them the better, and if it is so, why should we be afraid?

We have known brothers who have trembled at the slightest degree of publicity. They are tender souls, and do not like to be seen. I would not harshly *condemn* all, for certain minds are quiet and timid, and must be allowed to do good by stealth. But I cannot thus *excuse* all, either, for some are blamably deficient in courage. There is a beautiful modesty about them, but I would have them remember that modesty is not all the virtues, nor can it be a substitute for them. The soldier who was so very modest that he retired before the battle, I have heard say, was shot. And as for Christian people who are so very modest that they get out of the way of everything that is to be done for Christ, I do not know how they will answer for it to their superior Officer at the last. Come, dear brother, you sang the other day—

*“Am I a soldier of the cross,  
A follower of the Lamb  
And shall I fear to own His cause,  
Or blush to speak His name?”*

and so on, and yet you are a coward? Yes, put it down in English—you are a coward! If anybody called you so, you would turn red in the face, and perhaps you are not a coward in reference to any other subject. What a shameful thing it is that while you are bold about everything else, you are cowardly about Jesus Christ! Brave for the world, and cowardly towards Christ!! A Christian ought to be afraid to be afraid, for His Lord has said, “Whoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of Me, and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him, also, shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.” “Oh, but I am naturally timid,” says one. It is to you, then, that the Lord’s word is addressed—“Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not.” I have heard, and I think I have observed that the bravest men in the hour of danger are timid in the prospect of it. They say that a fire-eater who dashes to the battle is often the man who fails, but he who stands trembling at the first shot—in his inmost soul dreading death—is, nevertheless, the very man to act the hero’s part because he is so over-powered by a stern sense of duty that he masters fear, and steadily keeps his position with cool, immovable resolve—

*“The brave man is not  
He who feels no fear,  
For that were stupid and irrational.  
But he whose noble soul, its fear subdues,  
And bravely bares the danger nature shrinks from.”*

Up, then, you tremblers, and play the man! In the matter of speaking for Jesus this should not be a severe ordeal. Oh, do not, I pray you, let timidity so check you that you cannot speak a word to your own children—cannot pray with your own girl, cannot plead as a father with your own boy, cannot speak as a neighbor or a fellow workman to the man who works side by side with you at the bench. May God help you to get out of the cold shade of cowardice, for the text says, “Be not afraid.”

Still, I hear you say, “I am afraid to speak out for religion because I should bring down upon myself a world of opposition at home.” That is painful, my dear friend, but though painful, it is a part of the cost

which you reckoned upon when you took up the cross to follow Jesus. It is a part of the cost that, “a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.” “The brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child,” says Christ. It was so in old times. It is so now. It is terrible to think of what some young people have had to suffer for being faithful to their convictions. But when we consider that it is all for Jesus’ sake, happy are they who are honored to endure on that account! For His sake, what were it if we were martyred? What were it if all men did forsake us? We ought to have such an esteem for Jesus that if all were to become our foes, and to hunt us to death, we would still say, “It is well, since hereby I become a living sacrifice for Christ.”

Now, I charge every Christian here to be speaking boldly in Christ’s name, according as he or she has opportunity, and especially to take care of this tendency of our flesh to be afraid which leads, practically, to endeavors to get off easily, and save ourselves from trouble. Fear not! Be brave for Christ! Live bravely for Him who died lovingly for you!

**II. We now come to the second point—and this we will also speak upon briefly—it is THE CALLING OF OUR FAITH.** “Be not afraid, but speak and hold not your peace.”

It is the vocation of faith to be a speaker. When the heart believes, the mouth follows suit and makes confession. Faith made Noah a preacher, and caused it to be said of Abel, “He, being dead, yet speaks.” “I believed,” said David, “therefore have I spoken.” And others unite with Him in saying, “We believe and therefore speak.” Paul says of the Thessalonians, “For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak anything.” You see their faith had a sound about it as of a trumpet, and the gospel was made known, thereby, in all regions! Faith lives on the word of God, and then gives a voice to that word. A dumb faith is a questionable grace. Faith first speaks *to* Christ, and then speaks *for* Christ. It hears His voice, and then acts as an echo by repeating it!

Why ought those that believe in Christ speak for Him?

I answer, first, because, brothers and sisters, we are debtors. We are put in trust with the gospel for other people. Let us not be false to our trusteeship, but faithful stewards of the mysteries of God. Let us take care that the light is not hid under a bushel, and that the talent is not wrapped in a napkin. We have the bread of life in our houses—let it not be hoarded, neither let a single hungry soul knock at our door in vain because we are asleep or too idle to attend to the call. We are the reservoirs of God’s gospel that it may flow out of a hundred pipes to thirsty souls who may come from all quarters of the earth and drink! Paul says, “I am debtor, both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise.” We owe something to every man that lives. “Oh,” says one, “I do not see that.” But has not the Lord said, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself”? That is a word of very wide range, for every human being is your neighbor. The Samaritan was neighbor to the Jew. The Roman Catholic is neighbor to the Protestant. The Muslim is neighbor to the Christian, and the heathen is neighbor to us all. You never pass “a heathen Chinese,” or a Zulu in the street without owing him something, according as you have an opportunity to do him good. We are, all of us, of one family, and because of the tie of the one blood there is a debt of brotherhood from all who are enlightened to those who are yet in darkness. Who can tell what we owe to Christ? He seems to say, “Pay it back to My brothers and sisters. If you love Me, feed My sheep; feed My lambs. If you want to do good for Me, do good to Mine. Bring in those that I have redeemed with blood; for this is the best reward you can give Me for having laid down My life for you.” You are a keeper of the gospel oracles, my brother. Take care, then, that you speak and are not silent!

But, next, you and I were saved by the testimony of other people who spoke to us personally. I owe a great deal of my being brought to Christ to my parents to whom I would always be grateful for their spiritual care of me. And as a parent, I am to repay that obligation by teaching my own children. I owe very much to a very excellent teacher in a day school. I did try, when I personally taught children, to pay back my teacher by teaching others. I owed still more to such men as Baxter and Bunyan who left their books for me to read. I have tried to write earnest books, that I may recompense, as well as I can, the church of God for the loan which it made to me in that direction. Most of all, I owe my decision, under God, to a man I never knew, who humbly and simply preached Christ crucified to me—and I would desire to be always preaching Christ crucified to others, as the best way of making some sort of return. Undoubtedly the most of us were brought to Christ by the personal testimony of others, and therefore we have an obligation to pass on the sacred deposit. Even in those few cases in which no living voice was used, yet the word of God was made useful to the soul—and where would the word of God have been if it had not been for Wickliffe and Tyndale, and those holy men who preserved it to us at the peril of their lives, and wrote out



a translation of it for the common people—dipping their pens in their own heart's blood to accomplish the deed? We are all debtors to the church of God, and let us repay the gift! We shall be shamefully ungrateful unless we do this.

Next, let me ask how we to are expect the gospel to be kept alive in the world if we do not hand it on to the next generation as the former generation handed it down to us? It is from one lip to another that the word of God is passed with a kind of living flame which books are not likely to communicate. Oh, shall it ever be said a century from now, "The people of 1880 never thought of us of 1980? They let the gospel go! They allowed the doctrines to be denied, one after the other, and here we are without them, to perish in the darkness! The people of the Tabernacle knew the priceless truth of God, but they cared not to make it known, and here we are in ignorance through their indifference"? Oh, let it never be so! Let not the next century have to rebuke the professors of the present one, and say, "You were false to God. Your men never preached the gospel, though they had the gift! Your women never told it out to those about you, and so the light flickered and almost went out, and we are now left to suffer for your negligence." May God grant that we may be clear of the blood of souls. What a crime it will be if we murder generations of men by our cowardly silence!

Besides, it seems to me that common humanity calls upon every Christian to seek the salvation of others. They are perishing! Will you let them perish? "God have mercy on them," you say? Yes, but is that all? Have you nothing but that hurried prayer to give them? "Be you warmed! Be you filled," you say to the hungry and cold, and yet you fill them not from your own stores. God's curse will light on such inhuman conduct! It is ours to labor by pleadings and entreaties to snatch our infatuated neighbors from the fiery wave which will soon overwhelm impenitent sinners! But if we do not earnestly seek them, they shall perish, and God will require their blood at the watchman's hands! He has set each one of His people to take a part of the watch for the souls of men. Are we awake at our post? Oh, see you well to this, I pray you, each man, each woman for himself or herself! If we love God, we must love our brothers and sisters, also. If the gospel has saved us, we must wish to see others saved! Unless we are altogether hypocritical, we must burn with strong desire to bring others to the Savior! I have been pleased as I have looked around, to see such a goodly number of young men here tonight. Never was the weather worse and yet our numbers are great, and among us are young men in the hundreds! Comrades, I welcome you! I would gladly enlist you this night into the service of Christ! Come as volunteers! Or if you cannot manage that, come as pressed men. Oh, that the Lord Jesus Christ may lay His pierced hands on some young men, and say, "You are studying, but what for? Study for Me and My cause." And to another, "You are working hard to prosper in business, but you have another call, and you must consecrate yourself more directly to Me." Or to another man, "You are in business, making money. Are you using it for Me? Are you laying it out for the spread of My kingdom?" I would to God that He would call out to Himself a troop of valiant ones at this good hour! I feel somewhat, tonight, in thinking about London, as Farel did when he met with Calvin. Calvin was yet a young man. He had written his famous, "Institutes," and Farel, at Geneva, saw what mental force there was in him. Here is the story from Bungener—

"Farel, alike humble and courageous, had often asked if another would not succeed better than he, and a sort of presentiment had bid him wait in hope of such a man. Calvin was unwilling to undertake the work. He was not made, he said, for such an office. He was willing to be a laborer in the great harvest which was ripening, or to be a soldier of the Lord, but this, he was convinced, was not his task. If He had rendered some service, it was by means of a book, the fruit of silence and of study. Farel is urgent... Calvin educed fresh reasons, and it seemed as though he wanted to deter Farel by exhibiting to him the defects of his future colleague. He knew himself, he said. He was tenacious and obstinate. Once more he asked that he might be left in obscurity to busy himself in studies, for it was only thus he could be of any value. Then Farel broke out, 'Your studies are a pretext! I tell you that if you refuse to associate yourself with my work, God will curse you for having sought yourself and not Christ.' Calvin yielded to God, and not to man—and the man always remained dear and venerable in his eyes." Calvin was henceforth prompt and sincere in the work of the Lord, even when his body was tortured with diseases, and worn down with pain. Would God I might find some such man here who would, this night, respond to the voice saying to him, "Be not afraid, but speak and hold not your peace." A youth looks round and says, "I wonder whether that young man is sitting next to me?" Never mind about your neighbor—look to yourself! Are *you* the young man? Are *you* the consecrated woman? Take heed lest a curse light on you if you are disobedient to the heavenly vision!

**III.** But now, thirdly, THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF OUR SERVICE. Let us dwell on that a little while. “Be not afraid, but speak and hold not your peace, for I am with you.”

There is the first encouragement—God’s presence—“I am with you.” When a man speaks *for* God, God speaks *in* Him. We never go to war for God at our own charges—He is sure to be with the man who is with Him. If you seek yourself, you will run without God. If you desire honor among men, you shall have no honor from God. But if your heart is set upon the blessing of your fellow men, and the extension of your Redeemer’s kingdom, God is with you. He never was away from any man who sought holiness, virtue, and eternal life. What cause, then, can there be for fear? If God is with you, who can be against you? Have God with you, and you have strength enough, wit enough, gold enough—for you have grace enough! Does He not say, “My grace is sufficient for you”? He will give you thought, and judgment, and utterance. And He will give you within all and above all, a mysterious power which none shall be able to resist. He will help you to acquire what you have not, and wisely to use what you have. If He gives you not the tongue of the learned, He will use you where your need of learning cannot hinder you. He has a sphere for you somewhere. Only trust in Him, and be not afraid! O that precious word, “I am with you.” What more can the most fearful require? Come, be of good courage. Take up your cross! Take up your daily service! In these shall lie a present comfort and a future reward, and your God says, “My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest.”

The next consolation is God’s protection. “No man shall set on you to hurt you.” The Jews dragged Paul before the judgment seat of Gallio, and Paul must have been amazed when he saw the persecutors, themselves, beaten. The great King knows how to protect His own ambassador! When men meddle with one of God’s burning and shining lights, they will, sooner or later, burn their fingers. There is a disposition about some ungodly men to fly at Christian ministers just as gnats do at candles, and they generally meet with the gnats’ fate. “Touch not My anointed, and do My prophets no harm,” is still the shelter of God’s ministers. “No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue that rises in judgment against you, you shall condemn,” is a promise which abides the same. “Still,” says one, “I am half afraid.” But then the Lord is your protection, and who is he that shall harm you if you follow that which is good? How feeble all your enemies are! Who are you that you should be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man that is but as dust. “Fear not them which can kill the body, but afterwards have no more that they can do; but fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell. Yes, I say unto you, Fear Him.” The protection of God should be a constant fountain of comfort to God’s people.

The last comfort is God’s predestination. Predestination is an ugly word to some people, but I cannot help that. Here is the doctrine in the text—“I am with you, and no man shall set on you to hurt you, for I have much people in this city.” That is to say, many who belonged to Christ, though they were as yet heathens. The Lord does not speak of those who were converted! Paul did not need a revelation in the night to tell Him that God had much people in that city, if by that was meant the persons who professed faith in Christ, for he knew all about them. Night and day he had watched over them. But God knew that He had an elect people in Corinth whom He must save—a redeemed people that Christ specially bought from among men to be His own people, of whom the Lord had said, “Other sheep have I that are not yet of this flock.” Paul was cheered by the good news that God had many chosen and redeemed ones in Corinth whom He must save!

I learn from this that the doctrine of God’s predestination is no check to labor. “If there are so many that will be saved,” says one, “then why do you preach?” That is why we *do* preach! If there are so many fish to be taken in the net, I will go and catch some of them! Because many are ordained to be caught, I spread my nets with eager expectation. I never could see why that should repress our zealous efforts! It seems to me to be the very thing that should awaken us to energy—that God has a people, and that these people shall be brought in! Why, it nerves me to labor when I remember that His word shall not return void—it shall prosper in the thing where He has sent it! If God has ordained to save men, yet it is a part of the ordinance that they shall be saved through the preaching of the word of God, for “faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God”—and not without faith and the word shall *any* man be saved! Nor has God ever said that any should, or ever purposed that any should! The purpose embraces the means for the carrying out of the purpose, and that decree which predestinates the salvation of many in Corinth predestinates that Paul should go there, and that he should stay there a year and a half—and night and day, with tears, should seek the souls of men!

What a comfort it ought to be to all earnest workers that God has many people yet unsaved whom He will save and must save! Thus we go to work under the sweet shadow of the divine decree, stimulated by it to labor with all our might.

The next thing we learn is that the certainty of success should be a great stimulus to us. That is why the Lord said to Paul, "I have much people in this city." You and I are bound to preach the gospel, even if never a soul were converted by it, for the great objective of the gospel is the glory of God, and God is glorified even in those who reject the gospel! Still, it is a very sweet help to earnestness when we know that we shall not labor in vain, or spend our strength for nothing. "I have much people in this city" nerves Paul to go forth and proclaim bravely, in every place, that word of God which is to bring the people of God home to Himself.

But, next, we see very clearly that old means and methods are quite sufficient to save souls. Our Lord did not say, "Paul, be not afraid, but deliver a Sunday afternoon lecture with a nonsensical title and little or no gospel in it." No, no! Our Master said, "Speak and hold not your peace, for I have much people in this city." God's way of saving souls is the best way, after all! You and I may get up all sorts of inventions, and He may wink at our follies, and let us go on with them, but His way of saving souls is speaking the gospel, and nothing other than the gospel! I should like to see in the world, again, a revival like that under Jonathan Edwards in which there were no extravagances, no utterances of false doctrine, no making a noise and a riot—but just the preaching of the old-fashioned doctrines of grace! Those truths of God brought on a revival of a deep and enduring kind. Men were filled with an awful fear of God, and they repented bitterly, and mended their ways, and sought Jesus in dreadful earnest, and rested not till they found Him! They did not sing jigs, but they wept as one that is in bitterness for her firstborn. They flaunted no banners, but they laid hold on Jesus in the secret of their souls. They did not often shout, but they went home and talked, one to another, of what God had been doing in their souls and they lived near Him. I would like to see that old kind of work and life among us again! The Holy Spirit may work as He pleases, but still, that order of revival seemed to be deep and permanent, and the results were found after many days—whereas, nowadays—where are the converts of your revivals? Where are the converts after a little time has passed? All Paul did, when he knew there was much people in that city, was just to go and speak the gospel and not be afraid—I, for one, mean to keep to the old-fashioned way.

Once again, dear friends, usefulness, according to the text is the best protection a man can have. Notice that. "No man shall set on you to hurt you, for I have much people in this city." When God means to save people by any man, that man will live till the chosen are gathered in! He may go to sea, but storms cannot drown him! He may be waylaid by ungodly men, but robbers cannot hurt him! He is immortal till his work is done! There is no protection for anybody, depend upon it, like *usefulness*—God will not allow the goat to browse upon the branch that bears fruit—or the blast to wither. Men of God have gone into fever lairs, using all care and precaution, and they have been protected from the pestilence. It has happened that Christian men have been in perils by robbers, perils by false brethren, perils everywhere, but they have survived all and triumphed in all—and when they have not been thus upheld, it may have been because their ministry was ended. They went home because their day's work was over! Where else should they go? They went back to their Father, for their Father had no more need of them abroad. As long as God has anything for you to do, nothing will ever kill you, my brother! Go ahead and fear not. "I have much people in this city." Go to win them, and you shall be safe!

I believe that our position at this time is very much that of Paul's, for we, too, hope, trust and believe that God has much people in this city. What a city it is! Not one among us has any idea of the size of London! You shall go, today, to a well-remembered spot, and find yourself, all of a sudden, in a region which you never saw before—a township which has sprung up overnight! I remember an old oak tree and a pond with geese and cowslips growing in the meadow. It is a mile in town at the present moment, and the tree is gone and everything that was around it. Instead of a hedgerow I sigh to see an endless wilderness of brown bricks and stucco. Oh, this great city! It grows at an awful rate, but God has much people in it, depend upon it! I believe God means to bless London largely. You will ask, "Why?" Well, I look back upon its past history, and I have hope. The martyrs' blood lies here! When all the country was yielding its martyrs, London furnished its full share. On this very spot where we now are, three were burnt for the truth of God's sake. Old chronicles say, "At the Butts at Newington, three Anabaptists were burnt." These were among the earliest of martyrs, before Protestants were known or thought of. Anabaptists were always a prey, and they who killed them thought they did God a favor! Members of our ancient persecuted church were often burnt for the truth's sake, and for Christ's sake in London—and from the ground, their blood is

calling still! All over this London of ours, the preaching of the gospel was precious in the old times. You hear the name of, “Gospel Oak,” as you travel in the North of London, and the tree was so called because there the gospel was preached, and crowds gathered beneath its shade to listen to the joyful sound! All about the city secret groups met to worship God after the gospel way!

Now, the Lord will never let the blood of the martyrs die out! It will forever be the seed of His church. See, again, how London kindled with holy fire in the days of Whitefield and Wesley. Go but a mile from this place and notice Kennington Park, once Kennington Common. What thousands used to gather there to hear the gospel preached! The men of the south of London loved the gospel! Multitudes of them still do. I feel sure that God will yet bless London because at this very moment, if the gospel is preached so that people can understand it, they will throng to hear it! Alas, poor men cannot understand half the preachers. They preach Latin fit for drawing rooms. If they would go to Billingsgate and learn English, they might get on. You say, “That would be very rough English!” Well, but the roughest of English might be better than the Latinized jargon of most of our pulpits. When men preach the gospel plainly and simply, they will never lack a congregation in this great city, I am certain of it. Away in a hack street down in a hollow way just beyond Barclay and Perkins’s Brewery, where there are no cabs, or other public conveyances—right out of the world and into the mud—the crowds came and discovered a boy years ago, and they followed him because he preached the gospel in a way which they could understand. They will find a man *anywhere* if he will but preach the gospel of Christ! I am sure that the Lord has much people in this city because there is a hungering and thirsting after the gospel, if they could but get at it.

Go ahead, then, brothers and sisters! Talk about Christ! Talk about Him everywhere! Talk about Him in the workshop! Speak about Him quietly and modestly, prudently and gently, but carry out the blessed words of my text—“Be not afraid, but speak and hold not your peace.” Be this to each one his word of good cheer, “For I am with you, and no man shall set on you to hurt you: for I have much people in this city.” God bless you, for Christ’s sake. Amen and amen!

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